

# **BI-STATE REGIONAL COMMISSION**



## **PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

## **TELEPHONE SURVEY REPORT**

**DATA COLLECTED AND REPORT PREPARED  
BY**



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**NORTHERN ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University conducted 1012 telephone interviews with residents of Rock Island and Scott Counties in the Quad Cities area for a study sponsored by the Bi-State Regional Commission in May and June of 2001.
- The study provided public education and gathered public opinion about transportation and infrastructure issues facing the Quad Cities. Special attention was devoted to a proposed transportation plan that calls for construction of a new East Moline/Bettendorf bridge across the Mississippi River and road improvements throughout the two county area. The plan calls for these projects to be paid for by a one-half cent sales tax increase.
- When asked whether they would vote for or against such a plan in a referendum, 70% of all respondents reported that they'd be very or somewhat likely to vote for the plan, 39% would be very likely to vote for it.
- Only minor differences in support exist among residents in Illinois and Iowa. Support for the plan is slightly greater in Illinois (72%) compared with Scott County (69%).
- Between 68% and 79% of respondents in East Moline, Moline, Rock Island City and the rest of Rock Island County are very or somewhat likely to vote for the plan. Between 68% and 70% of residents in Bettendorf, Davenport and the rest of Scott County are very or somewhat likely to vote for the plan.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents who said they would vote for the plan cited traffic problems related to cars, accidents, and construction on other bridges as a reason they favor the plan. Nearly 20% of the same group reported road improvements as one of the reasons they support it. Another 14% favor the plan due to the regional economic development needs that the plan may bring to the area.
- Opposition to a new tax was the most common reason provided by those who opposed the plan.
- Nearly 76% of all respondents had heard about the proposed East Moline/Bettendorf bridge before the interview. More than 80% were aware that the tolls on the Centennial Bridge were being removed. By contrast, just over half (53%) were aware of lane expansion on the Interstate 74 bridge.
- Over 64% cross the Mississippi River on some bridge at least twice a week. Nearly two in five interviewed cross the Mississippi at least 5 times per week.. The I-74 crossing tends to be used by 73% of respondents followed in frequency by the Centennial (34%), Arsenal (18%), I-80 (12%), and I-280 (11%) crossings.
- More than 73% of respondents believe that crossing the Mississippi is a problem. One in three of all respondents report crossing the Mississippi is a big problem. A similar proportion of respondents report that crossing I-74 is a problem, with 36% of all respondents saying crossing I-74 is a big problem. More than a third (37%) of respondents think that the proposed new bridge would lessen traffic problems on other bridges a great deal. Seventy-one percent say it would lessen traffic either a great deal or somewhat.
- Strong support for regional economic development was reported by 45% of respondents, and another 31% percent somewhat favor economic development. Seventy-two percent say that the proposed new bridge would aid economic development in the area.
- Almost 89% of respondents say that road improvements are needed in the area.
- Another 64% agree that local government is working together to address area transportation needs. Almost 85% rate the quality of bridge crossings as very or somewhat important to the area.
- Community response to the study was quite positive. The study response rate was 59%. The study sample was randomly drawn and reflects the demographic diversity of the area. Margin of error is +/-3.1%.

## INTRODUCTION

Northern Illinois University's Public Opinion Laboratory (POL) conducted 1012 telephone interviews with residents of the Quad Cities region on behalf of the Bi-State Regional Commission (BSRC) in May and June of 2001. The main purpose of the study was to determine public opinion regarding a transportation initiative involving construction of a new bridge crossing between East Moline, IL and Bettendorf, IA, as well as road improvement projects throughout Rock Island and Scott Counties. The transportation proposal would fund the bridge construction and road improvements by a one-half percent sales tax increase in the two counties. The proposal would have to be approved by referendum in both counties in order to pass. Survey questions were designed to gather public opinion about Mississippi River crossing and regional transportation issues with a special emphasis on bridge crossing issues, opinion about a new bridge and other road improvements, and likelihood of voting for or against a referendum to support the transportation proposal.

Survey data show that Mississippi River crossings are a prominent concern for residents in the area. Crossing the Mississippi River is important to area residents based upon the high proportion of respondents who cross the Mississippi two or more times per week. A substantial majority of respondents rated crossing the Mississippi River a problem, especially crossing the river using the I-74 bridge. A similar proportion of respondents said that Mississippi River crossings are an important issue facing the area. A substantial majority would vote in favor of the transportation proposal. The main reasons respondents said they'd vote for the proposal were 1) the new bridge would positively affect bridge traffic throughout the area, 2) the need for road improvements throughout the area, and 3) the positive impact the new bridge may have on economic development in the area.

The report is organized into several sections that describe the findings of the survey:

- Purpose of the research study
- Who participated in the survey
- Respondent familiarity with different bridge projects
- Frequency and patterns of bridge usage
- Public opinion about Mississippi River crossing issues
- Economic development issues
- Public opinion about current road conditions
- Public Opinion about the Transportation Plan
- Reasons for support or opposition to transportation plan
- Other factors related to support or opposition to transportation plan
- Miscellaneous transportation issues
- Report summary

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

POL was contracted by the Bi-State Regional Commission to collect telephone survey data in Rock Island County, Illinois, and Scott County, Iowa to gauge 1) Public knowledge of Mississippi River crossing development, 2) Public usage of current Mississippi crossing alternatives, 3) Public opinion about transportation issues in the Quad Cities region, especially Mississippi crossing and road improvement issues, and 4) Public opinion about a referendum to fund a proposed Mississippi River crossing between East Moline, IL, and Bettendorf, IA and other road improvements throughout the Quad Cities region with a one half cent sales tax increase in Rock Island and Scott Counties.

POL staff worked closely with BSRC staff and Metropolitan Authority representatives to construct a survey questionnaire in the Spring of 2001. The final survey was designed to educate survey respondents and the public about Quad Cities regional transportation issues while determining community opinion about Mississippi River crossings and other transportation needs.

POL conducted a pretest of the survey with a small number of randomly drawn Davenport, IA, residents on April 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> to confirm that the survey questions were clear to respondents, the computerized questionnaire program was operating properly, and that the survey was not too long in duration for respondents to conveniently complete. During this time, the Quad Cities was experiencing severe flooding of the Mississippi River, and POL was eager to determine whether the area flooding would hinder data collection. POL encountered little or no impact of flooding in the pre-test. A small number of minor question modifications were approved by BSRC following the pre-test, and actual data collection began on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

It is important to examine the demographic characteristics of the final sample in order to determine how representative of the study population the data truly are. The final sample data conform well to the sample design which was developed with the goal of getting geographical representation in proportion to the population of the five largest cities plus the remainder of communities and unincorporated areas in Rock Island and Scott counties. POL collected more than 500 surveys from both Illinois and Iowa residents.

### Description of Sample Methodology

The POL set out to randomly sample the Rock Island and Scott County population by gathering data through Random Digit Dial (RDD) sampling techniques. POL employed a sample of telephone numbers generated using the Rock Island and Scott County area codes and telephone number stems, the first three digits of the local telephone number. Using the RDD generated sample, POL sought to collect data that mirrored the geographic distribution of Rock Island and Scott Counties. Of particular emphasis are the communities of East Moline, Moline, Rock Island City, and the rest of Rock Island County in Illinois and Bettendorf, Davenport, and the rest of Scott County in Iowa. In order to approximate the proportion each community's population represents in the study area, the POL's sample design called for close monitoring of respondent residence for completed interviews. The reason POL and BSRC is concerned with geographic representation of respondents throughout the study area is to determine whether survey respondents residential proximity to the current bridges and the proposed bridge crossing impacted support for the transportation proposal.

### Sample Areas & Margin of Error

POL followed the sample design, completing 1,012 interviews with approximately half (508) coming from residents of Rock Island County and half (504) in Scott County.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 shows the expected proportions of completes based upon area population and the corresponding number and proportion of completed cases for the same community areas. The sample design worked as planned producing final data that were distributed throughout the two county area as expected. Due to the success of the sample design, the survey data summarized in this report are very close to the projected margin of errors at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error, commonly referred to as the confidence interval is smallest for the Davenport community data along with the county-wide data.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of completed interviews with confirmed residents of Rock Island County is 491 while for Scott County it is 467. These numbers reflect 1) respondent unwillingness to report the zip code of their households, and 2) RDD phone stem overlap across adjoining county boundaries. Nevertheless, these data are included in analysis for the report since there is little reason to believe that this small group of respondents differs significantly from Rock Island and Scott County residents, particularly in outlying areas of the counties.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE DESIGN PROJECTIONS, COMPLETED INTERVIEWS, AND MARGINS OF ERROR

Area/Community	2000 Census Population (% of 2 County Pop)	Projected Completed Interviews	Completed Interviews (% of Total)	Margin of Error (Projected Error) <sup>2</sup>
East Moline	20,333 (6.6)	66	76 (7.5)	12.04 (12.04)
Moline	43,768 (14.2)	142	118 (11.6)	9.01 (8.21)
Rock Island City	39,684 (12.9)	129	148 (14.6)	8.04 (8.61)
Rock Island Co. Remainder (minus E. Mol., Mol. & R.I. City)	45,589 (14.8)	148	132 (13.0)	8.52 (8.04)
Other IL & Missing	NA	NA	17 (1.6)	NA
Illinois Subtotal	149,374 (48.5)	485	508 (50.1)	(4.34) 4.44
Bettendorf	31,275 (10.2)	102	108 (10.6)	9.41 (9.69)
Davenport	98,359 (31.9)	319	297 (29.3)	5.68 (5.48)
Scott Co. Remainder (minus Bettendorf & Davenport)	29,034 (9.4)	94	79 (7.8)	11.01 (10.09)
Other IA & Missing	NA	NA	37 (3.7)	NA
Iowa Subtotal	158,668 (51.5)	515	504 (49.8)	4.36 (4.31)
Total	308,042 (100.0)	1000	1012 (100.0)	3.08 (3.09)

*Calling Activity & Response Rate*

The POL fielded 1630 telephone numbers in Iowa and 1400 telephone numbers in Illinois, or a total of 3030 numbers to complete 1012 interviews. POL interviewers conducted

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<sup>2</sup> Margin of error is calculated using a 95% confidence level, the standard level of confidence employed in social science research. The margin of error is the plus or minus figure that newspapers and other media outlets report for poll results. It tells us within what range the true opinion of the entire area population falls. The confidence level describes how certain we are that the true opinion of the entire population of an area is within the margin of error estimate.

12,476 phone calls during the course of the study. Calling began on May 1<sup>st</sup> and lasted 56 days until the data collection closed on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

The response for the study was a quite acceptable 59 percent.<sup>3</sup> Of the 3030 numbers POL fielded, 1012 were completed, 698 were refusals to participate, and 1320 were rejected as non-working or otherwise ineligible numbers. Response rates for the two counties were within 3% of one another. POL encountered more non-working numbers in Scott County.

### Demographic Summary

POL asked several demographic questions of respondents. As is customary, such personal items were asked at the end of the questionnaire. POL asked about gender, age, educational achievement, length of residence in the Quad Cities, registered voter status, and income. Please refer to Table 2 for demographic summary of respondents. In addition, POL asked respondents to provide us with their residential zip code in order to track the number of completed interviews for each of the communities within our sample area.

POL also collected information about the number of adults and the number of telephone lines in the household. These are used to weight the data. However, all results in this report are based upon the raw or *un-weighted* data. In this case, because of the similarity of responses across all respondents combined with the even distribution of household size and number of phone lines in each community, little difference between the un-weighted and weighted results exists.

Slightly more than half of all respondents were women (54%). POL was able to obtain this representative gender balance by employing a random selection methodology at the beginning of the phone call. This procedure is designed to compensate for the greater likelihood that a woman rather than a man will answer the phone in multi-person households.

The average age of respondents is 48 years old. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 92 years old. Sixteen percent were younger than 30, 17% were in their 30s, 22% were in their 40s, 19% were in their 50s, 13% were in their 60s, and 13% were 70 or older.

Approximately 35% of all respondents reported completing high school or less. Another 34% have attended college, vocational school, or graduated from a two-year college. More than 30% are college graduates, with about a third of those reporting some graduate school experience or a graduate degree.

Just over 50% of respondents report having lived in the Quad Cities at least 30 years with an average time in the Quad Cities of 32 years. However, 18% have lived in the area 10 years or

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<sup>3</sup> The response rate is determined by dividing the number of completed interviews by a tally of the number of eligible households; rejected numbers are eliminated from the formula.

less; almost 15% of all respondents have moved to the area within the last five years.

More than 90% of all respondents report they are registered to vote.

A little more than 12% of all respondents report a gross household income of between \$15,000 and \$25,000. Another 12% report an income of \$25,000 to \$35,000. Eighteen percent earn between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and a similar percentage earns between \$50,000 and \$75,000. On either end of the scale, slightly more than six percent earn less than \$15,000 and eight percent earn more than \$100,000.

The average number of adults residing in respondent households is 1.9. Twenty-eight percent are single adult households, 57% are two adult households, and the rest have three or more adult members. Eight percent of households have more than one phone line.



TABLE 2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE DATA\*

Demographic	Category	Count	Percent
Gender	Male	458	45%
	Female	553	55%
Age	18-29 years	165	16%
	30-39 years	174	17%
	40-49 years	225	22%
	50-59 years	187	19%
	60-69 years	127	13%
	70 or more years	127	13%
Education	HS Diploma or less	352	35%
	Some College	339	34%
	Bachelors or more	319	31%
Length of Residence in Quad Cities	Less than 5 years	147	14%
	6-10 years	38	4%
	11-20 years	117	12%
	21-30 years	199	20%
	More than 30 years	508	50%
Registered to Vote	Yes	922	91%
	No	88	9%
Gross Household Income	Less than \$15,000	65	6%
	\$15,000 - \$25,000	122	12%
	\$25,000 - \$35,000	121	12%
	\$35,000 - \$50,000	184	18%
	\$50,000 - \$75,000	185	18%
	\$75,000 - \$100,000	102	10%
	More than \$100,000	83	8%
	Refused	123	12%

Note: Counts and percentages for each item do not sum to 1,012 or 100% due to missing data and rounding errors.

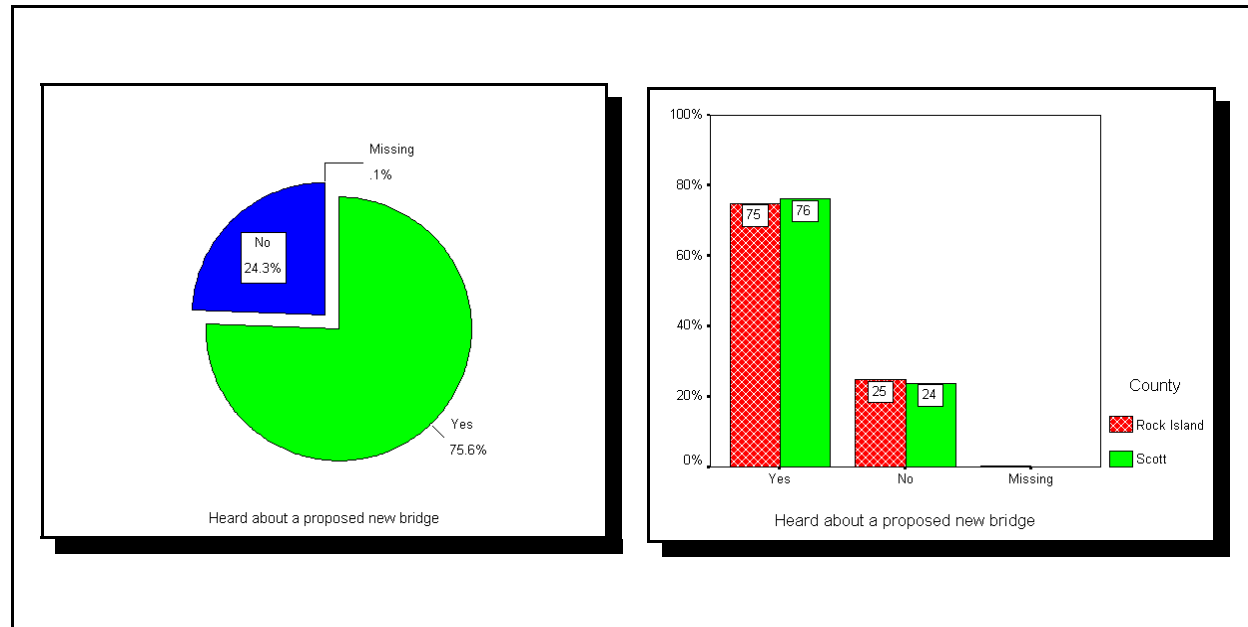
## KNOWLEDGE OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT

In general, respondents are very knowledgeable about the improvement projects underway or planned for Quad City area Mississippi River crossings. For example, a majority of respondents had heard about 1) a proposed new bridge between East Moline and Bettendorf, 2) a plan to remove tolls from the Centennial Bridge, and 3) plans to expand lanes on the Interstate 74 crossing.

### Heard of Proposed New Bridge

More than 75% of all respondents had heard about a proposed new bridge crossing the Mississippi River between East Moline and Bettendorf. Very little difference in familiarity about the bridge proposal was found when comparing respondents from both sides of the river.

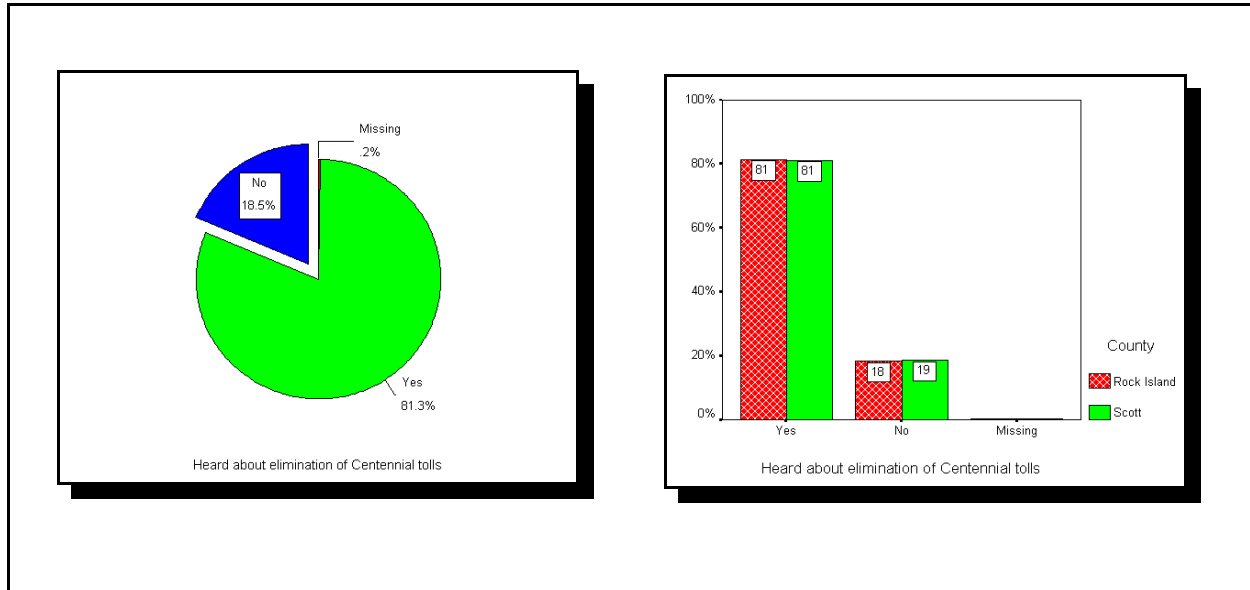
FIGURE 1. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PROPOSED BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST MOLINE AND BETTENDORF



### Heard of Toll Removal

When asked whether they had heard about the removal of tolls from the Centennial Bridge between Rock Island City and Davenport, 81% responded yes.

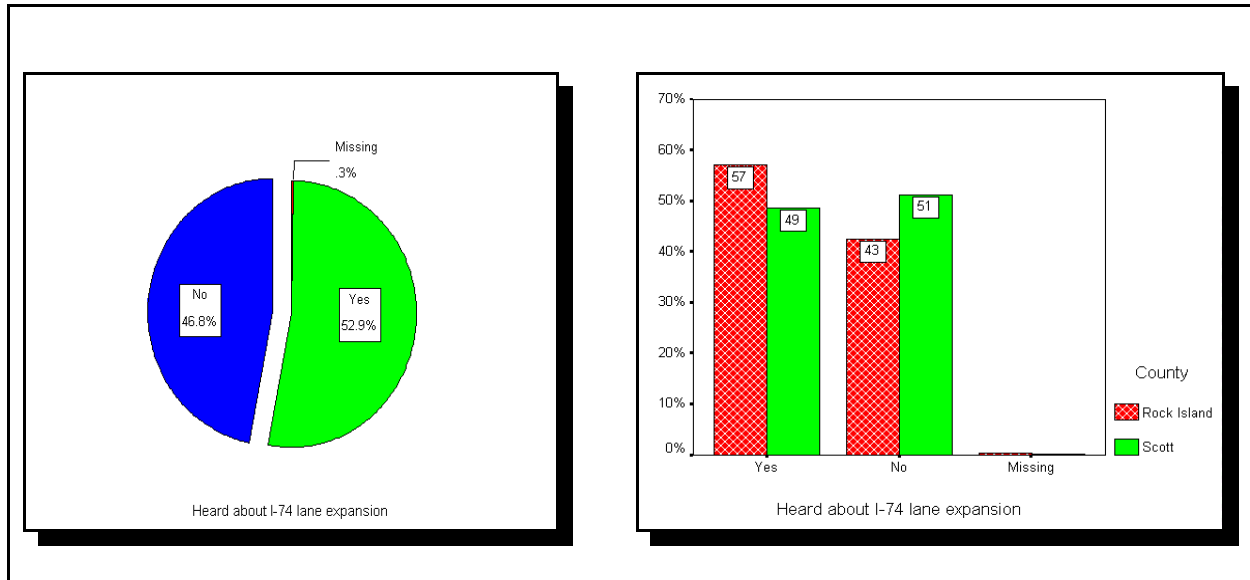
FIGURE 2. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT REMOVAL OF TOLLS FROM THE CENTENNIAL BRIDGE



### Heard of Expansion of I-74

When asked about lane expansion to the Interstate 74 bridge connecting Moline and Davenport, 53% answered affirmatively. Respondents were much less knowledgeable about this component of bridge crossing improvements underway or under consideration compared to the previous two. This is perhaps surprising, especially in light of the higher usage of the I-74 crossing by respondents (detailed below). Illinois residents were more knowledgeable than their counterparts in Iowa.

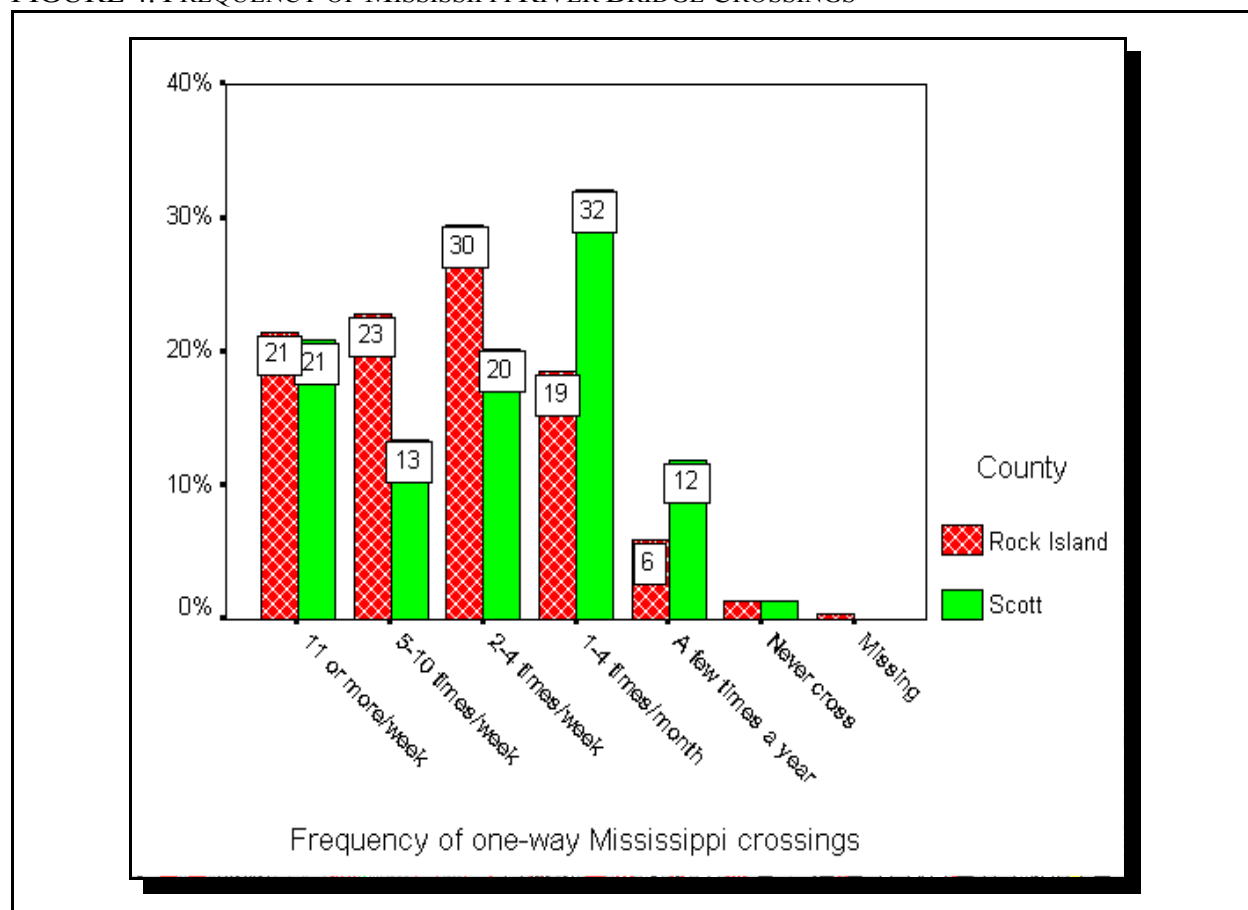
FIGURE 3. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EXPANSION OF LANES TO INTERSTATE 74 CROSSING



## FREQUENCY AND PATTERNS OF BRIDGE USAGE

Use of Mississippi River bridges in the Quad Cities is quite frequent for a large proportion of respondents. More than one out five respondents reported crossing the Mississippi one-way more than 10 times per week. Forty-three percent cross one-way between two and 10 times per week. About 35% cross once per week or less. Only one percent never cross the river. Illinois residents are on average more frequent crossers of the Mississippi than Iowans.

FIGURE 4. FREQUENCY OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE CROSSINGS



Interstate 74 is the most common Mississippi River crossing used by respondents. The I-74 crossing tends to be used by 73% of respondents followed in frequency by the Centennial (34%), Arsenal (18%), I-80 (12%), and I-280 (11%) crossings (percentages sum to greater than 100% due to respondents answering that they tend to use more than one bridge to cross the river).

At least 60% of all respondents in each local community in both Illinois (East Moline, Moline, Rock Island City and the rest of Rock Island County) and Iowa (Bettendorf, Davenport, and the rest of Scott County) say they tend to use the I-74 bridge.

## PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT RIVER CROSSING ISSUES

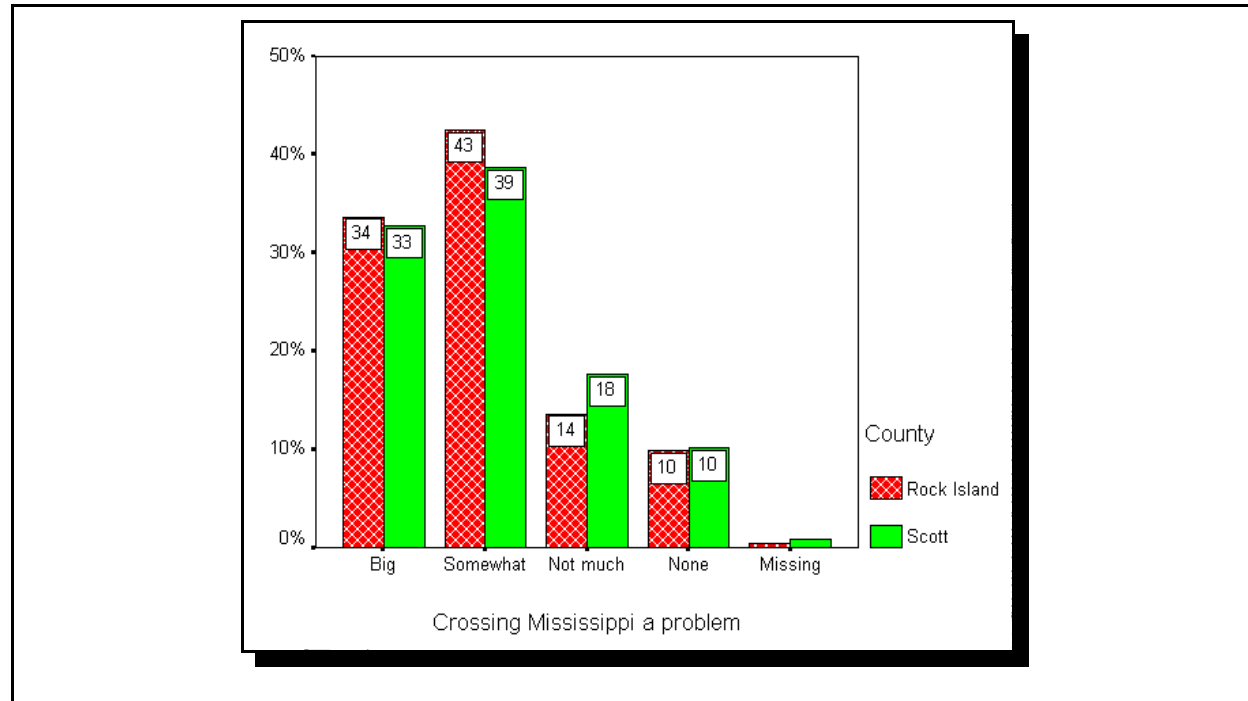
The survey asked respondents about a number of issues related to the proposed transportation plan including their opinions about 1) whether crossing the river is problematic, 2) whether the proposed East Moline/Bettendorf bridge would lessen current traffic problems on other bridges, 3) whether they favored economic development in the Quad Cities, 4) whether the proposed new bridge would positively impact economic development, and 5) the current status of community roads.

Respondents were read a brief statement that outlined the proposed transportation plan before being asked these five questions. The statement informed respondents that the plan calls for construction of the new bridge and that the bridge would be paid for by a one-half cent sales tax increase in Rock Island and Scott Counties. Respondents were also told that half of the money raised through the sales tax increase would be returned to local communities in the counties to fund road improvement projects.

### Opinion about Crossing the River

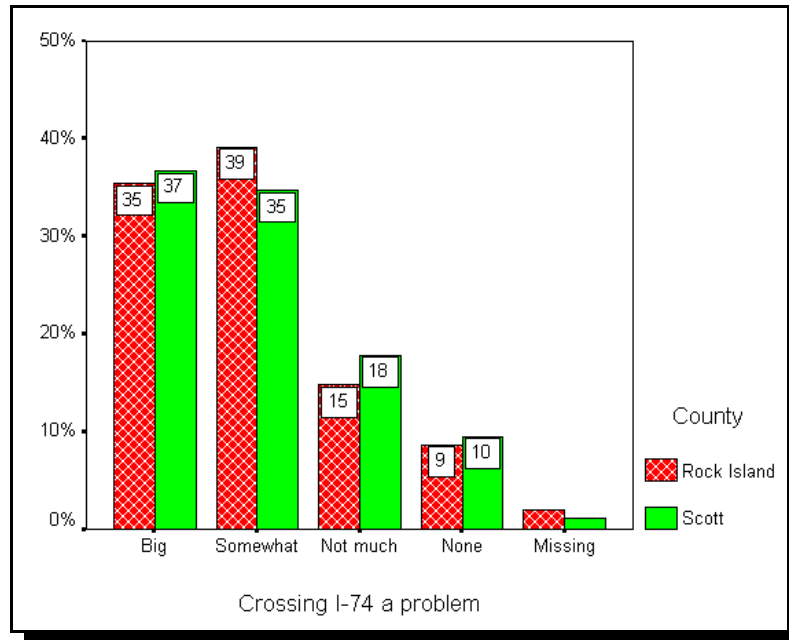
More than 73% of respondents believe that crossing the Mississippi is a problem. One in three of all respondents report crossing the Mississippi is a big problem. Only 10% of all people responding said that crossing the Mississippi is not a problem at all.

FIGURE 5. HOW MUCH OF A PROBLEM IS CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER



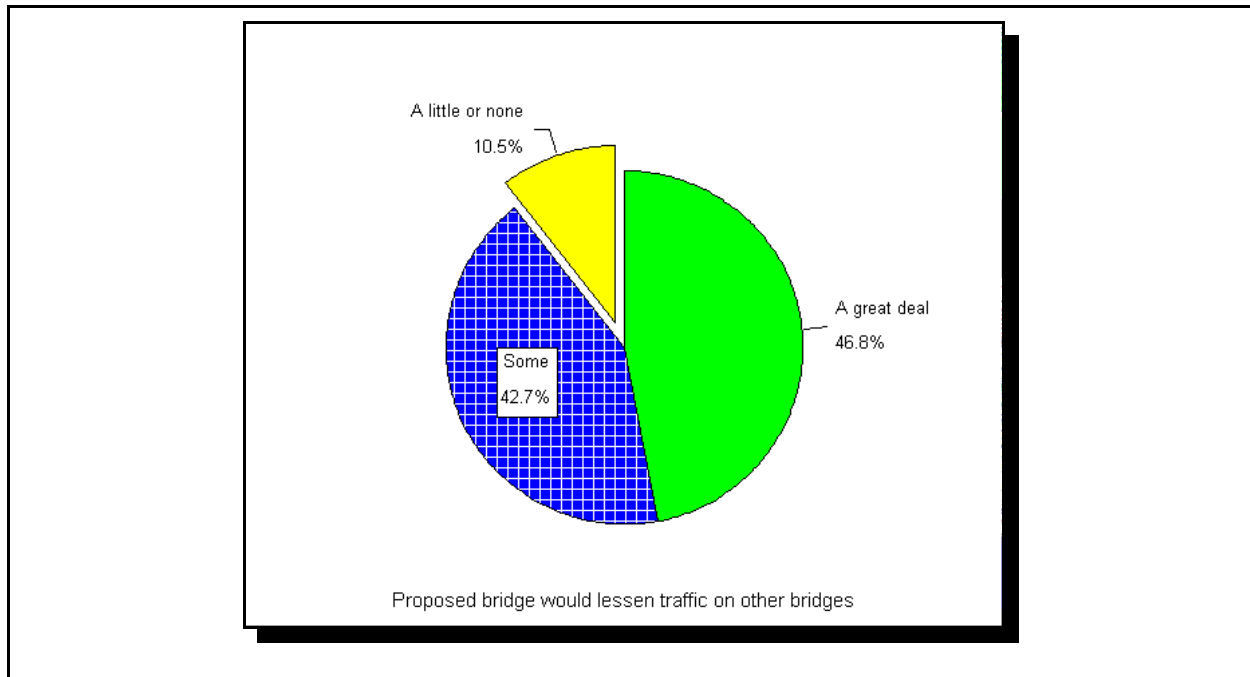
A very similar proportion of respondents report that crossing I-74 is a problem, with 36% of all respondents saying crossing I-74 is a big problem.

FIGURE 6. HOW MUCH OF A PROBLEM IS CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER USING I-74



Almost half (46%) of all respondents who said that crossing the Mississippi River was at least a small problem think that the proposed new bridge would lessen traffic problems on other bridges a great deal. A total of 89% said it would lessen traffic either a great deal or somewhat.

FIGURE 7. DEGREE PROPOSED EAST MOLINE/BETTENDORF BRIDGE WOULD HELP TRAFFIC ON OTHER BRIDGES



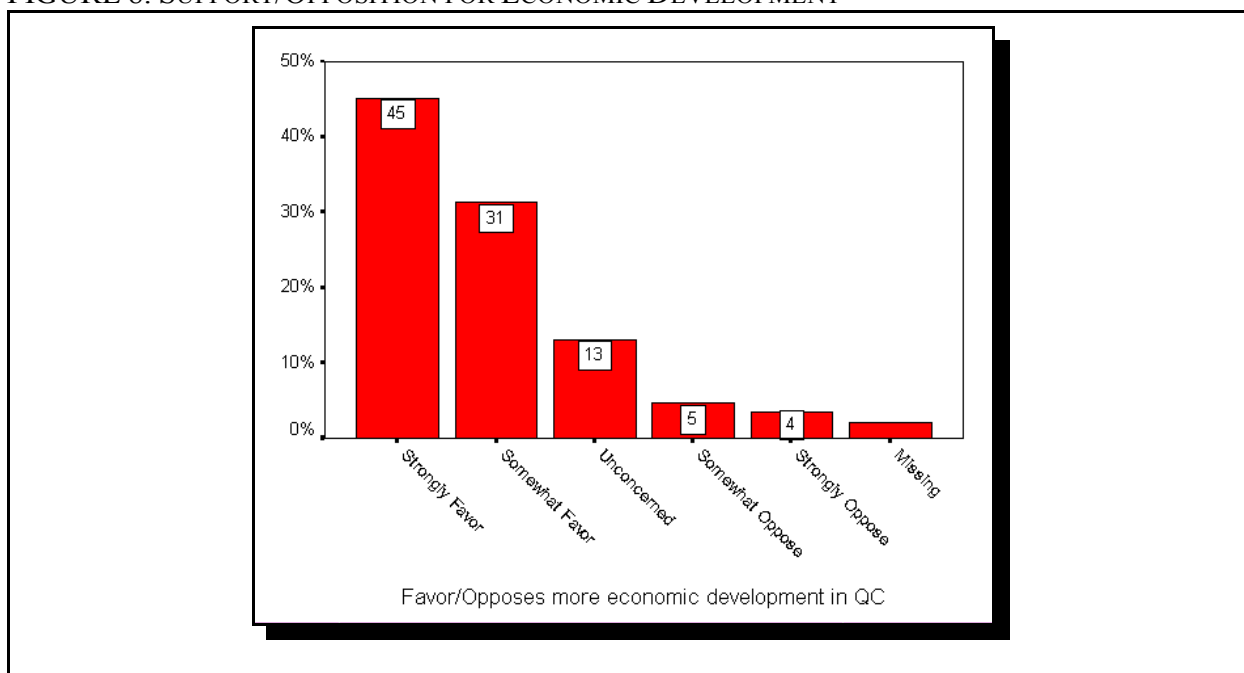


## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

In general, respondents were largely in favor of economic development in the area and tended to think that the new bridge would have a positive impact by encouraging economic development in the area.

Strong support for regional economic development was reported by 45% of respondents, and another 31% percent somewhat favor economic development. Thirteen percent are unconcerned about development issues.

FIGURE 8. SUPPORT/OPPOSITION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Seventy-two percent reported that the proposed new bridge would aid economic development in the area. Approximately 48% said that the new bridge would help development in the area somewhat.

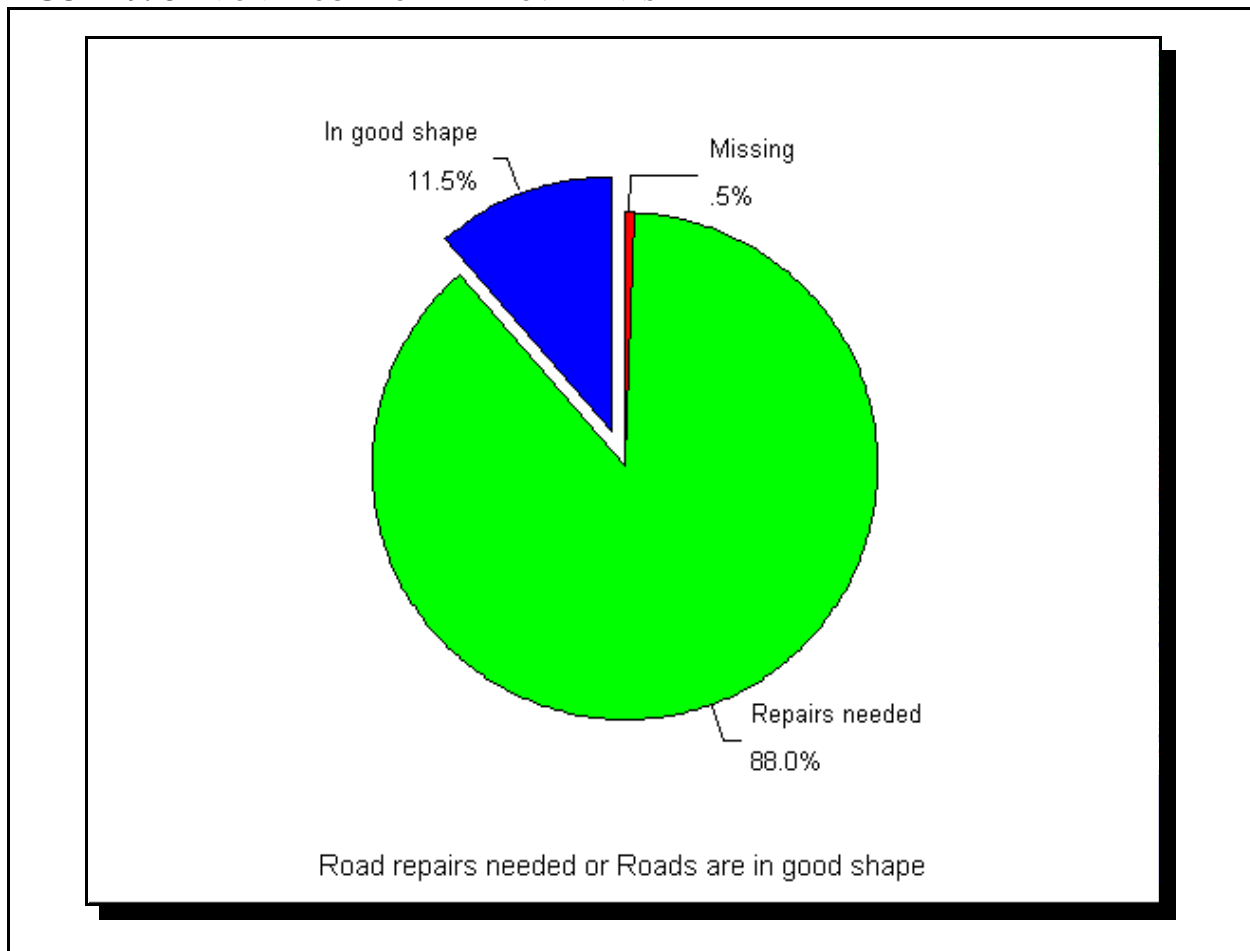
## PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT CURRENT ROAD CONDITIONS

It was important to assess whether road improvements were a concern for area residents. To determine concern about roads, respondents were asked the following question:

*“Would you say that roads improvements and maintenance projects are needed in your community, or that the roads in your community are in good shape?”*

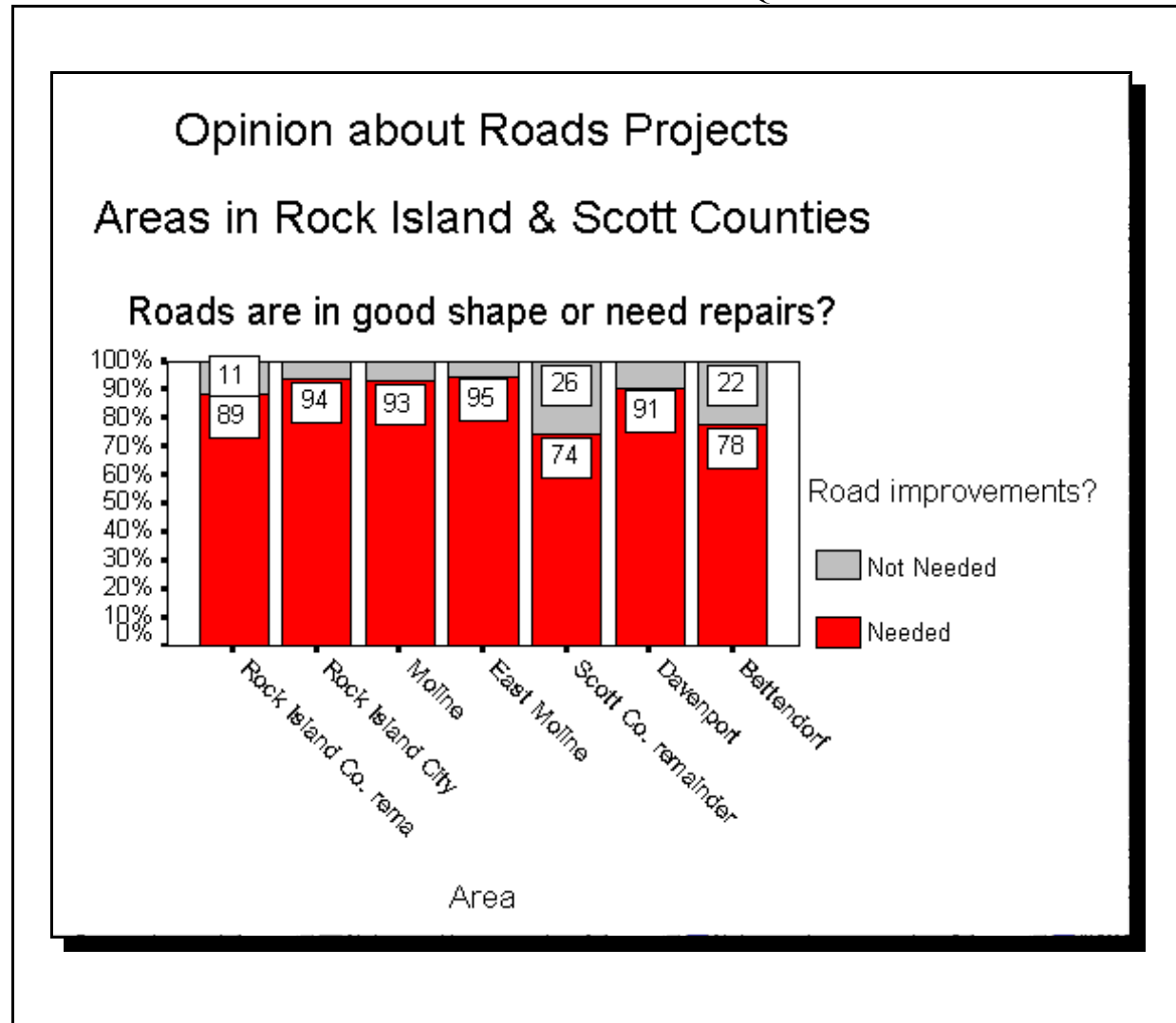
A very large majority of respondents said that road improvements are needed. Eighty-eight percent of respondents said that road improvements are needed in their community. Less than 12% said that the roads in their area are in good shape.

FIGURE 9. OPINION ABOUT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS



Substantial support for road improvements was found within each of the Quad Cities communities ranging from a low of 74% in Scott County to 95% in East Moline. However, in two areas, Bettendorf and Scott County, more than 20% of respondents reported that the roads are in good shape rather than in need of repair.

FIGURE 10. OPINION ABOUT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AMONG QUAD CITIES AREAS



## PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN REFERENDUM

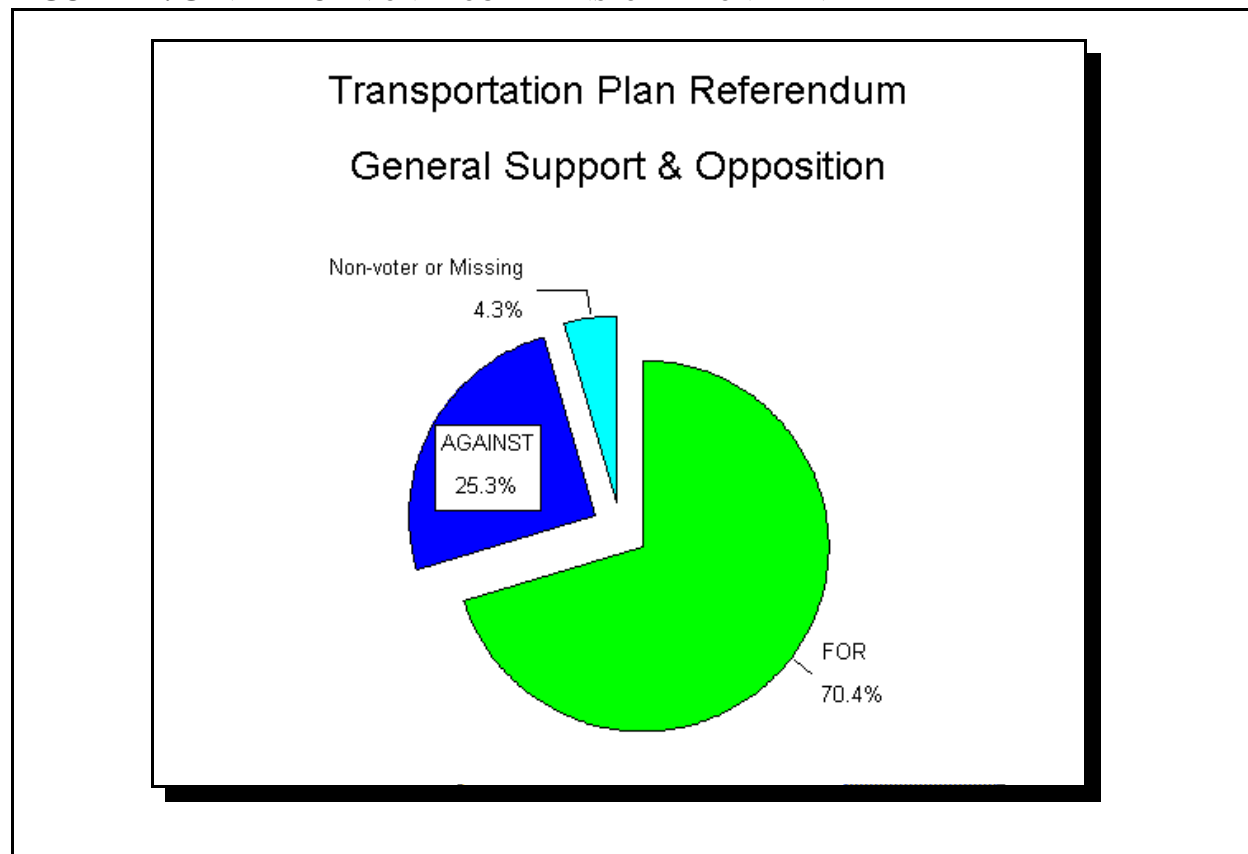
The central question in the survey concerned whether respondents were likely to vote for or against the transportation plan in a hypothetical referendum:

*“If a referendum were to be held tomorrow about a one-half cent sales tax increase for construction of a Bettendorf to East Moline bridge and other road improvements throughout the Quad Cities region, would you be 1) Very likely to vote FOR, 2) Somewhat likely to vote FOR, 3) Somewhat likely to vote AGAINST, or 4) Very likely to vote AGAINST the referendum?”*

Interviewers also were given the option to record if respondents stated they were unlikely to vote at all, although interviewers did not provide this option verbally to respondents over the phone. To ensure that respondents were not biased by the order of the response categories, each respondent was randomly assigned to answer the question with either “very likely to vote FOR, etc.” or “very likely to vote AGAINST, etc.” read first. Question wording did not impact support or opposition for the transportation plan referendum.

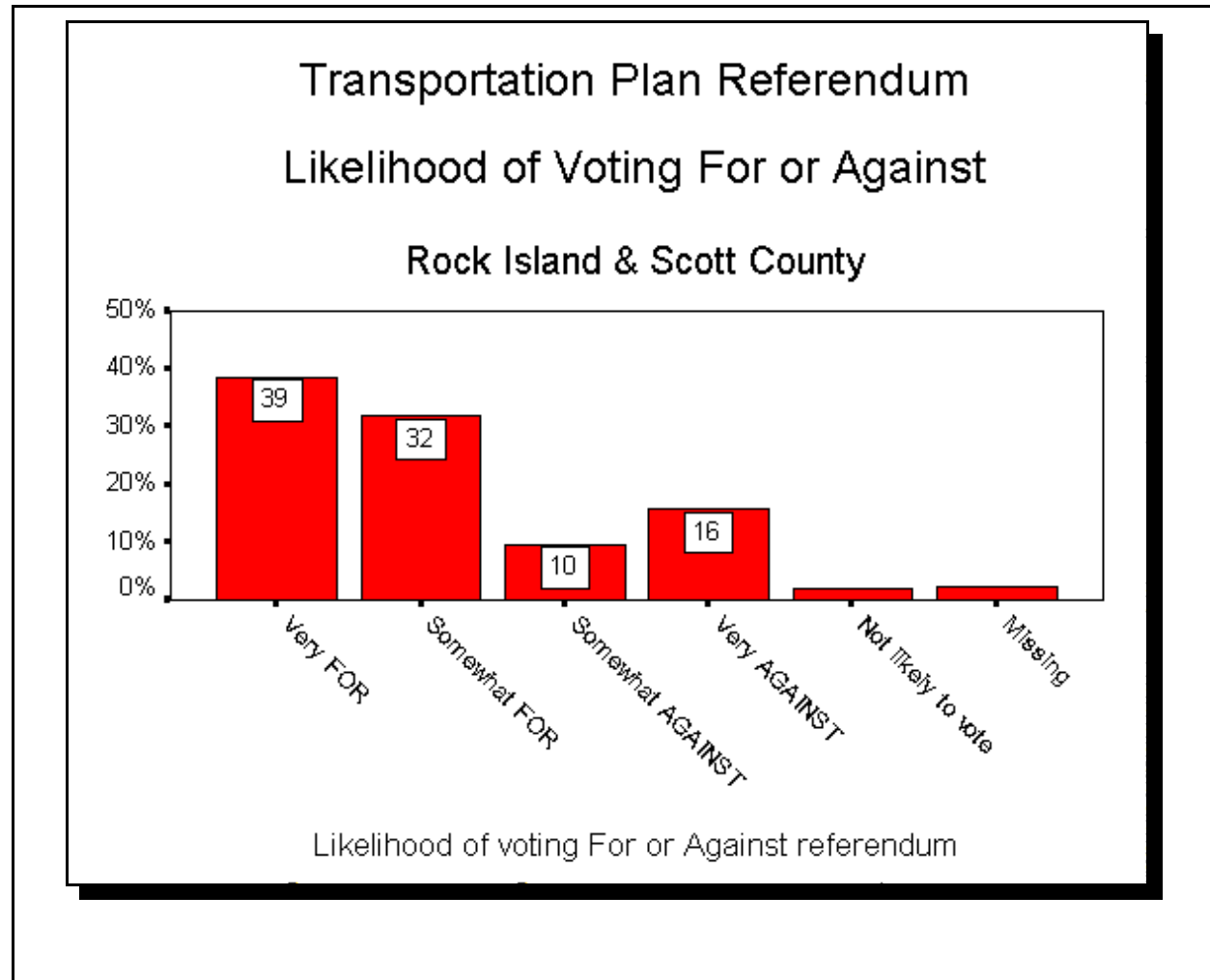
Support for the referendum was generally quite high, with over 70 percent of respondents either very or somewhat likely to vote for the transportation plan. Only 25% opposed the plan.

FIGURE 11. GENERAL OPINION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Being very likely to vote for the plan was the most common response to the question, with 39 percent of respondents in this category. A combined 26 percent of respondents were very or somewhat likely to vote against the transportation plan, more than half of whom were very likely to vote against the plan. Only 2 percent volunteered that they were unlikely to vote at all.

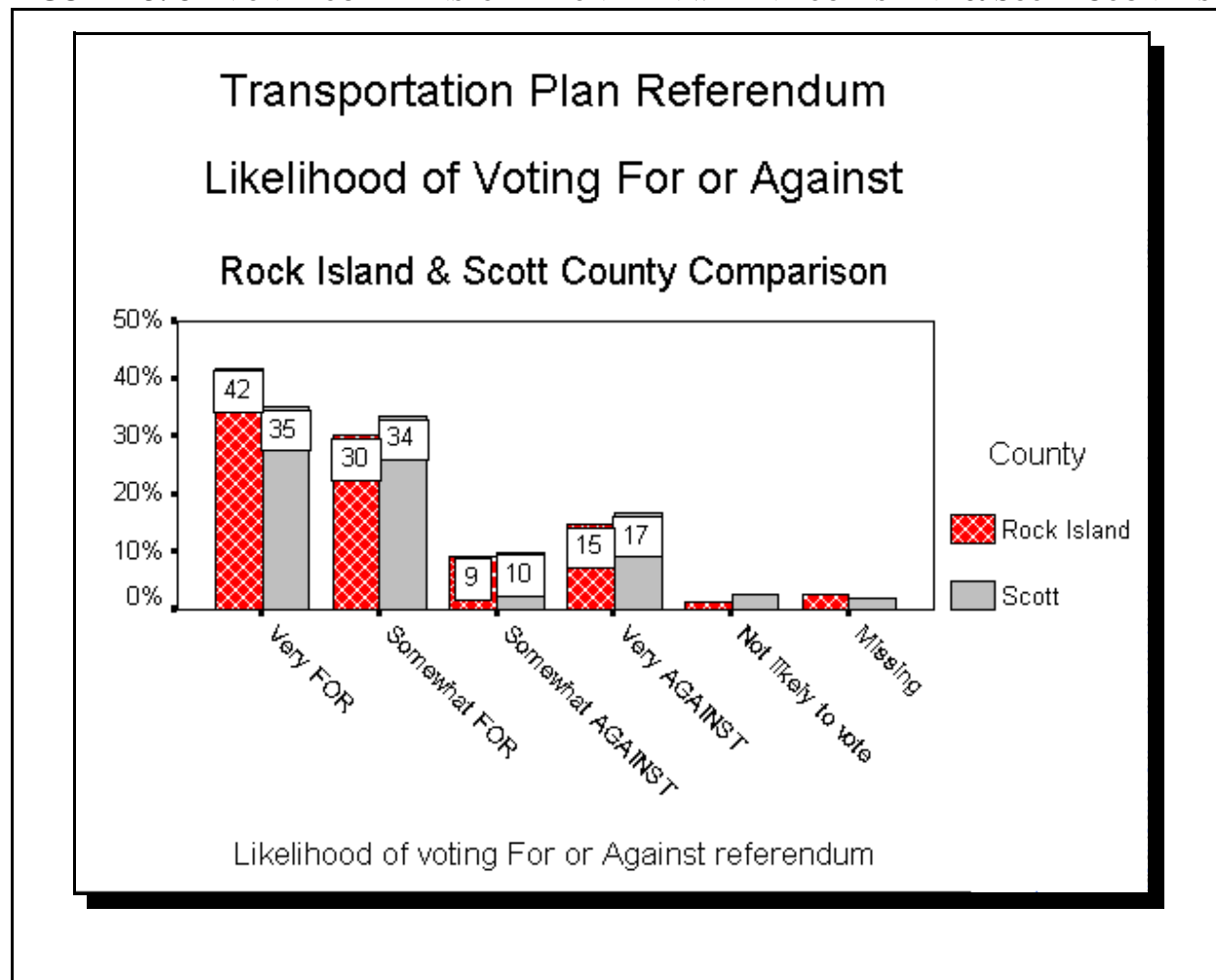
FIGURE 12. STRENGTH OF OPINION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLAN



### Comparing Rock Island and Scott County Support/Opposition to the Transportation Plan

Overall, there was very little difference in support for the transportation plan referendum between Rock Island and Scott counties. There is slightly more support for the plan in Rock Island than in Scott County in terms of overall support and in degree the degree of support. Seventy-two percent of Illinois respondents would vote for the plan while 69 percent of Iowa respondents would do the same. More solid support for the plan is found in Illinois where 42 percent of respondents said that they'd be very likely to vote for the plan compared to 35% among Iowa respondents. The average difference in support, however, is not statistically significant.

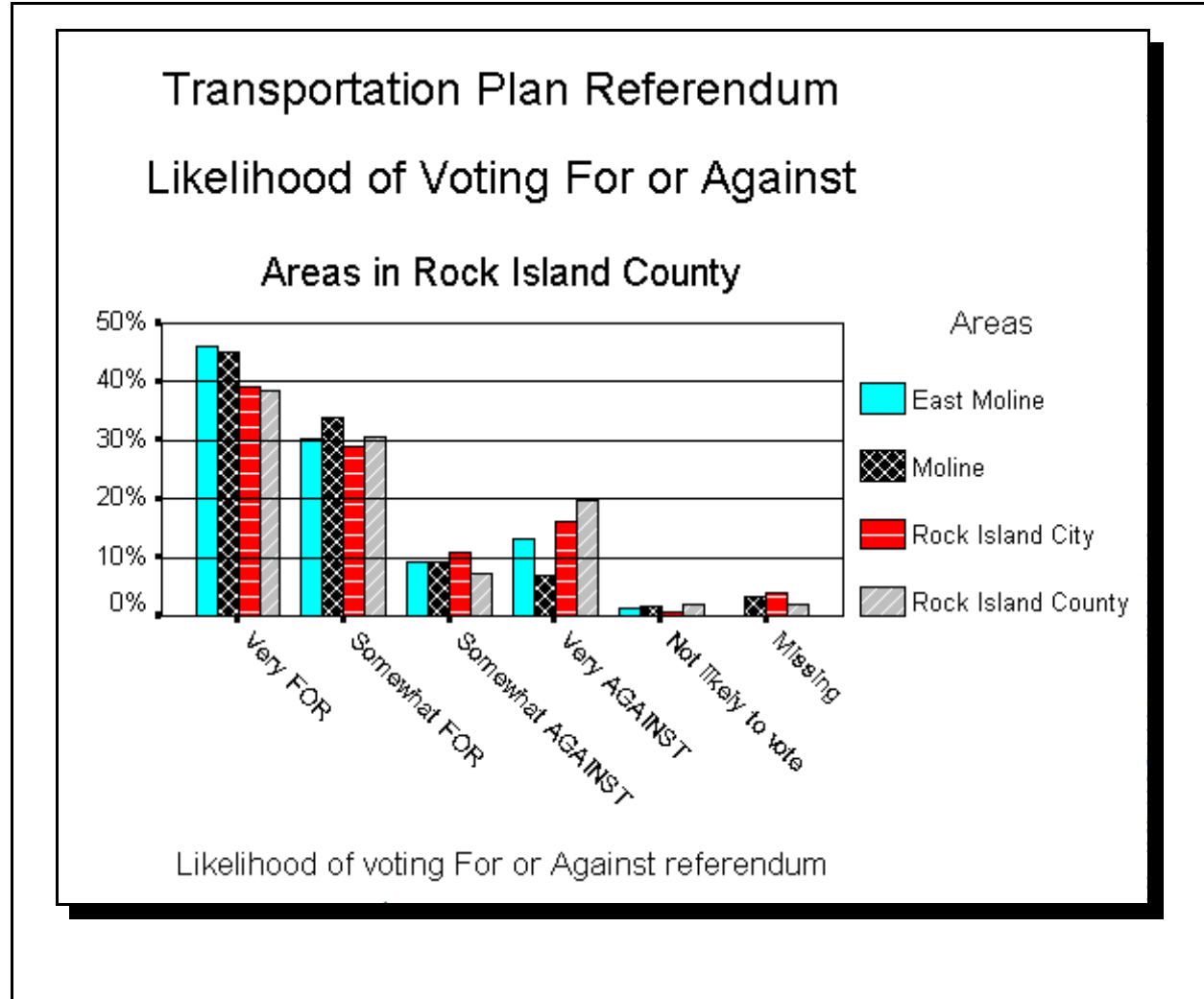
FIGURE 13. OPINION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLAN WITHIN ROCK ISLAND & SCOTT COUNTIES



### Support For/Against Transportation Plan within Rock Island County

There is relatively strong support for the transportation plan in all community areas in Rock Island County. As might be expected, the community with the strongest support is East Moline with 46% of respondents very likely to vote for the plan. This compares to 45% in Moline, 39% in Rock Island City, and 39% in the rest of the county. On the other hand, 13% of East Moline, only 7% of Moline, 16% of Rock Island City and nearly 20% of Rock Island County respondents said they'd be very likely to vote against the plan.

FIGURE 14. STRENGTH OF OPINION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR ROCK ISLAND COUNTY



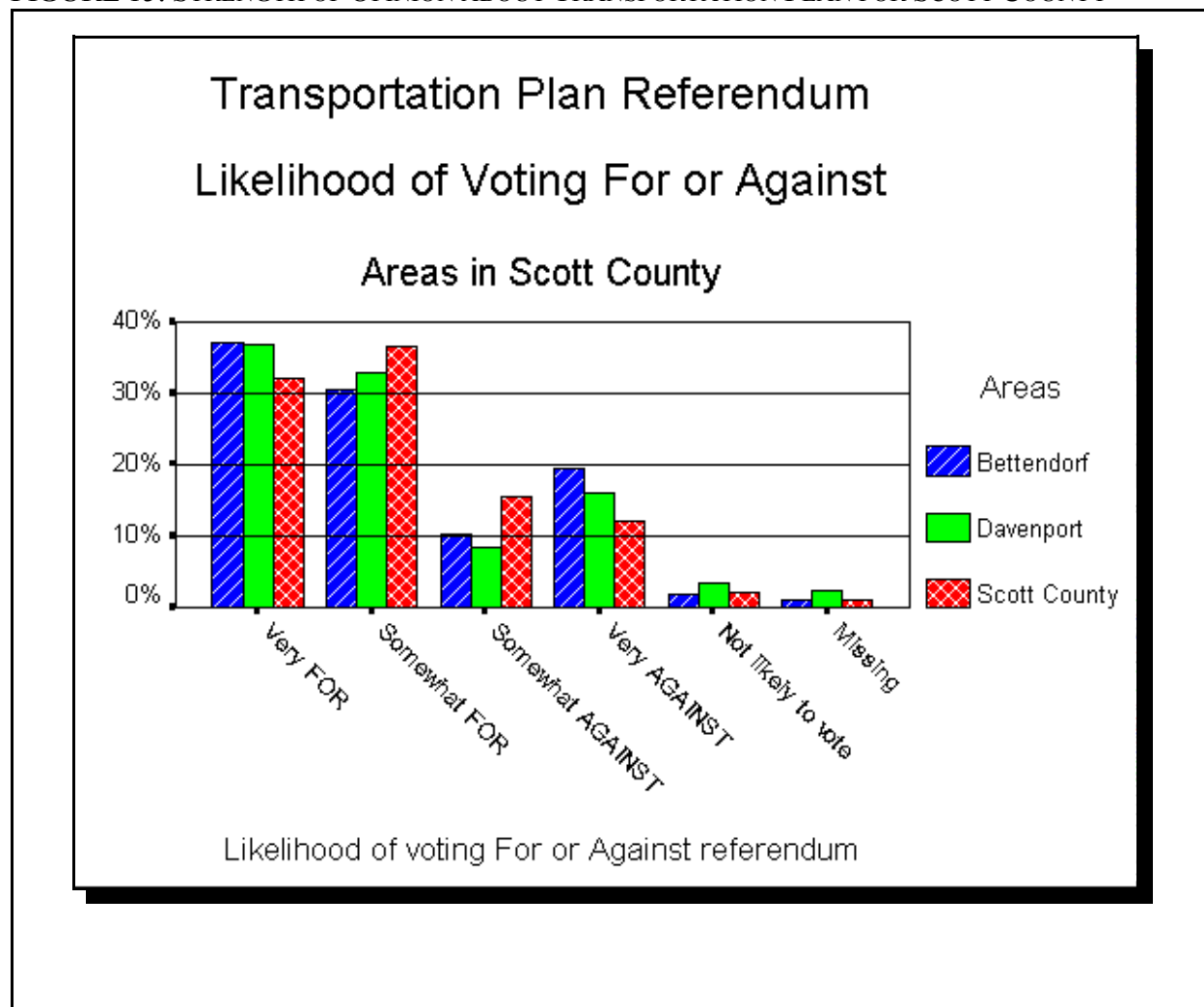
This general pattern may reflect each area's relative level of satisfaction with current bridge and road repair conditions and the comparative need for improvement in these areas. East Moline and neighboring Moline may have the most to gain from the new bridge connecting East Moline and Bettendorf. East Moline residents stand to benefit most directly in gaining direct bridge access. Moline residents may be able to see large improvements in traffic conditions on the Interstate-74 bridge as a result along with increase crossing choices. As one moves farther

away from the new bridge location, for example out into the county and farther West towards Rock Island City, the benefits of a new bridge are somewhat less concrete. This is supported by the lower likelihood to vote for the plan in these areas. However, the overriding pattern is one of substantial support. Even in the Rock Island City and the rest of the county, the areas possessing the least amount of support, nearly 70% of respondents say they are very or somewhat likely to vote for the plan.

#### Support For/Against Transportation Plan within Scott County

Overall, there is little difference in the levels of support and opposition to the transportation plan when examining the community areas of Scott County side by side. Perhaps unexpectedly, Davenport and Bettendorf have nearly identical levels of strong support with approximately 37% of respondents in each area reporting they would be very likely to vote for the plan. Also surprising is that the Iowa community with the most opposition to the plan is Bettendorf with roughly 20% very likely to vote against the plan in a referendum.

FIGURE 15. STRENGTH OF OPINION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR SCOTT COUNTY





## **GIVEN REASONS FOR SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

### **Support**

Following the referendum question, respondents were asked to provide reasons for their decisions to vote for or against the proposed transportation plan referendum. The most frequent reason given by supporters of the referendum was that current traffic levels are too high on the existing bridges, particularly I-74. Thirty-six percent of respondents who said they would vote for the plan cited traffic problems; many mentioned the volume of cars, rush hour, the frequency of accidents, and construction projects on Mississippi River bridges as a reason they favor the plan. The I-74 crossing in particular was mentioned by name by 150 respondents who favored the proposed plan. This combined with other data collected on opinion about I-74 in this study suggests that I-74 is perceived to be a real problem for area drivers.

Nearly 20% of those who said they'd vote in favor of the proposed plan reported road improvements as one of the reasons they would support it. Road improvements are an attractive piece of the proposal to a sizeable proportion of the study sample. Road improvements are also attractive to those who said they would vote against the proposed transportation plan.

Another 14% favor the plan due to the regional economic development assets that the plan may bring to the area. With strong support for general economic development in the area, those who see the transportation plan as an economic opportunity for themselves and the Quad Cities region are not insignificant in numbers. Support for regional development is stronger than support for the transportation plan. Opinion that the bridge will help economic development in the area is muted compared to support for development in general. Demonstrating how the new bridge and other road projects are likely to improve economic development would likely increase support for the transportation plan among those who favor development.

### **Opposition**

As might be expected, the chief reason respondents were opposed to the transportation plan was the tax increase necessary to fund it. More than 55% of the 263 persons who said they would vote against the referendum measure stated opposition to the one-half cent sales tax increase. Nineteen percent of those opposed to the plan thought that a new bridge was not needed. No other specific reason was cited by more than six percent of respondents opposed to the plan.

## **OTHER FACTORS RELATED TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

An examination of respondent demographic characteristics as well as opinion on other survey questions can yield important information about what factors underlie the level of support or opposition to the proposed transportation plan.

### **Demographic Factors**

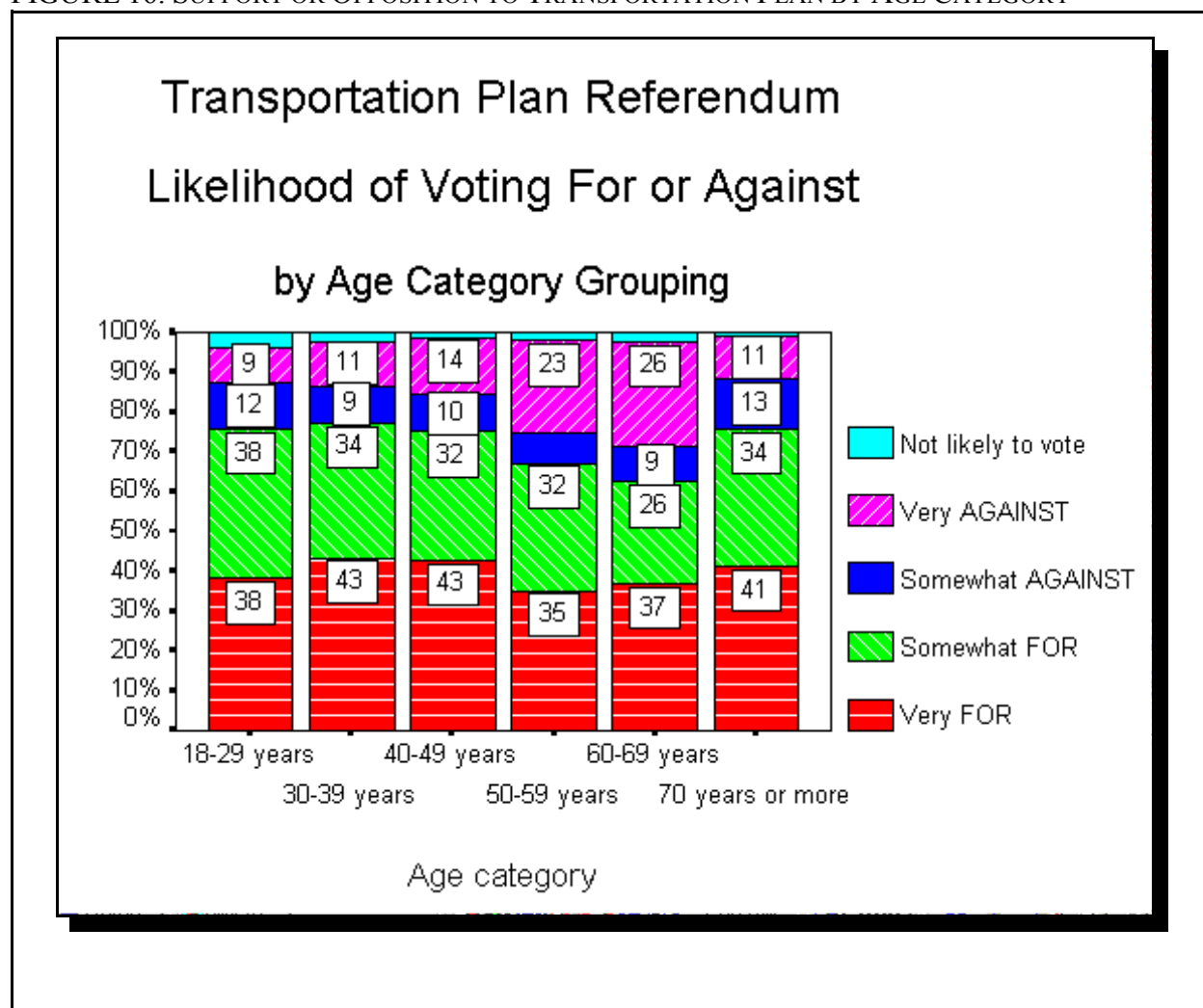
An examination of two demographic factors, age and gross household income, reveal that support for the plan is substantial across all age and income categories. However, there is variation across these categories as well.

#### **Age**

Respondents were grouped into one of six age categories: 18-29 years (16% of sample), 30-39 years (17% of sample), 40-49 years (22% of sample), 50-59 years (19% of sample), 60-69 years (13% of sample), and 70 or more years old (13% of sample). Those who said that they were very or somewhat likely to vote for the proposed transportation plan in a referendum constituted roughly 75% of four of the age groups: 18-29 year olds, 30-39 year olds, 40-49 year olds, and 70 or more years.

The most opposition to the plan was concentrated among two age groups, the 50-59 and the 60-69 year old age categories. However, opposition is still a large minority position even in these groups with 67% respondents in their 50s and 63% of those in their 60s somewhat or very likely to vote for the transportation plan.

FIGURE 16. SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN BY AGE CATEGORY



### Income

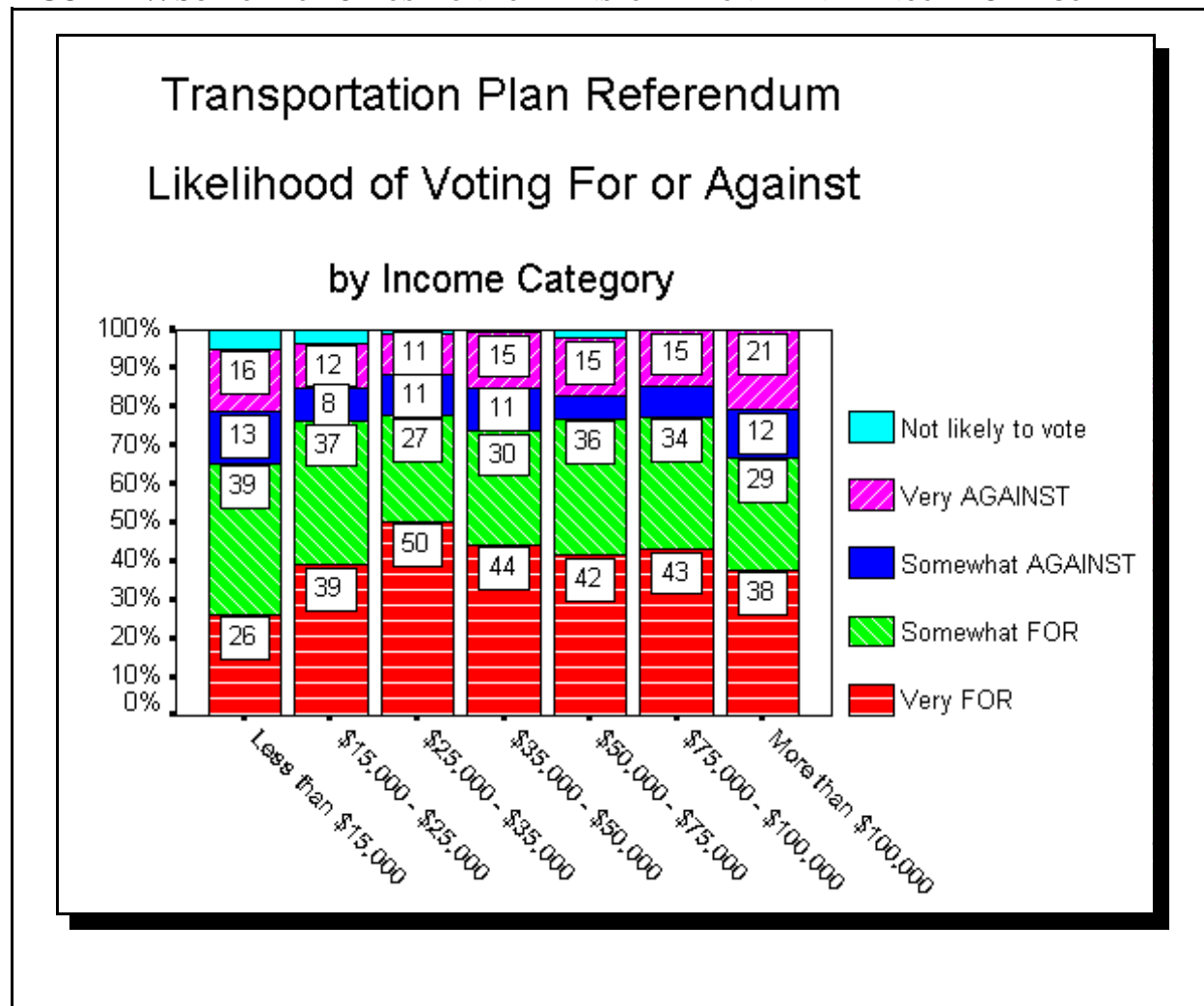
Eighty-eight percent of respondents answered a question about their annual gross household income. The income question asked which of seven income category groupings described the income level of the respondent's household: 1) less than \$15,000 (six percent of sample), 2) \$15,000 to less than \$25,000 (12% of sample), 3) \$25,000 to less than \$35,000 (12% of sample), 4) \$35,000 to less than \$50,000 (18% of sample), 5) \$50,000 to less than \$75,000 (18% of sample), 6) \$75,000 to less than \$100,000 (10% of sample), and 7) \$100,000 or more (eight percent of sample).

Support for the transportation plan reached at least 65% for all income groups. All but two income groups, those earning less than \$15,000 and those earning \$100,000 or more, show levels of support for the transportation plan of at least 74%. Those in the lowest income category were the least supportive of the plan, and the least likely to vote in the hypothetical referendum.

Only 26% of those in the lowest income group said they were very likely to vote for the plan. In contrast, more than 40% of respondents in the middle income categories ranging from \$25,000 up to \$100,000 reported being very likely to vote for the plan.

A full one in five in the upper income category were solidly against the transportation plan. However, this group of respondents represents less than two percent of the entire survey sample.

FIGURE 17. SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN BY INCOME CATEGORY



### Opinion other Survey Questions and Support or Opposition to the Plan

The proposed transportation plan has two distinctive pieces: 1) Construction of a new bridge between East Moline and Bettendorf, and 2) Road improvements throughout the Quad Cities areas. Either of these parts of the plan may be important to respondent opinion about the overall plan, one may be more important. In attempt to learn more about why respondents support or oppose the plan, additional analysis that focused on survey items related 1) to opinion and experiences with the Interstate-74 bridge and 2) opinion about whether local area roads need improvement was performed.

To link support or opposition to the plan with how respondents feel about the Interstate 74 bridge, a series of cross-tabulations were conducted. Two survey items mention I-74 by name in the wording of the question or the responses provided to respondents from which to choose. These two items are 1) whether respondents knew about plans to expand I-74, and 2) whether respondents felt crossing the Mississippi using I-74 was a problem.

Table 3 shows that the percentage of those who had heard about expansion of the I-74 crossing (53%) and those had not was about equal (47%). Fifty-eight percent of those who heard about the I-74 expansion were very likely to vote for the transportation plan. Fifty-eight percent of those who had heard of I-74 expansion were very likely to vote against. What emerges from these figures is that those who had heard about the plan to expand I-74 before the survey interview were more likely to have stronger opinion about the proposed transportation plan than those who were unaware of I-74 expansion. Those who had heard about the expansion of I-74 were about 2.5 times as likely to strongly favor the plan than oppose it.

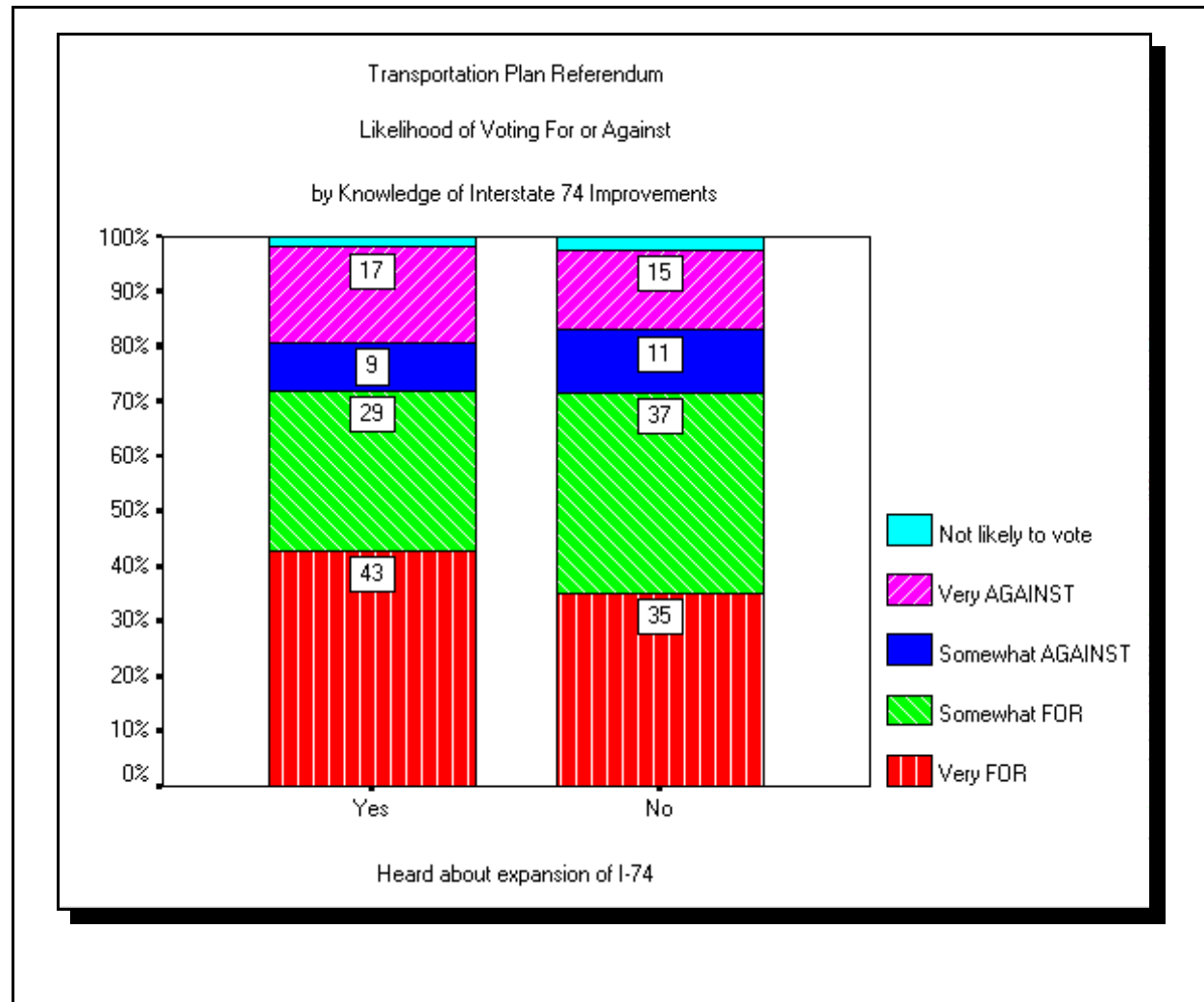
TABLE 3. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT I-74 EXPANSION BY SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION PLAN\*

Heard of I-74 Expansion	Very Likely to Vote FOR Plan	Somewhat Likely to Vote FOR Plan	Somewhat Likely to Vote AGAINST Plan	Very Likely to Vote AGAINST Plan	Not Likely to Vote	Total
Yes	226 (.58)	153 (.48)	45 (.46)	92 (.58)	10 (.52)	526 (.53)
No	162 (.42)	168 (.52)	52 (.54)	67 (.42)	11 (.48)	480 (.47)
Total	388	321	97	159	21	986

\*Note: Figures reported in parentheses represent within "Support" category percentages.

Figure 18 slices these data a bit differently, but the same picture emerges; little difference in support or opposition for the plan is found in comparing those who had heard about the I-74 expansion versus those who had not. Figure 18 shows what proportion of those who support or oppose the transportation plan had heard about I-74 expansion. Most of the difference in support or opposition to the plan is in the strength of support. Overall support or opposition is roughly equivalent for both those who knew and those who did not know about I-74 expansion before the survey interview. Those who knew of I-74 expansion were more likely to be very likely to vote for the plan as opposed to somewhat likely to vote for the plan.

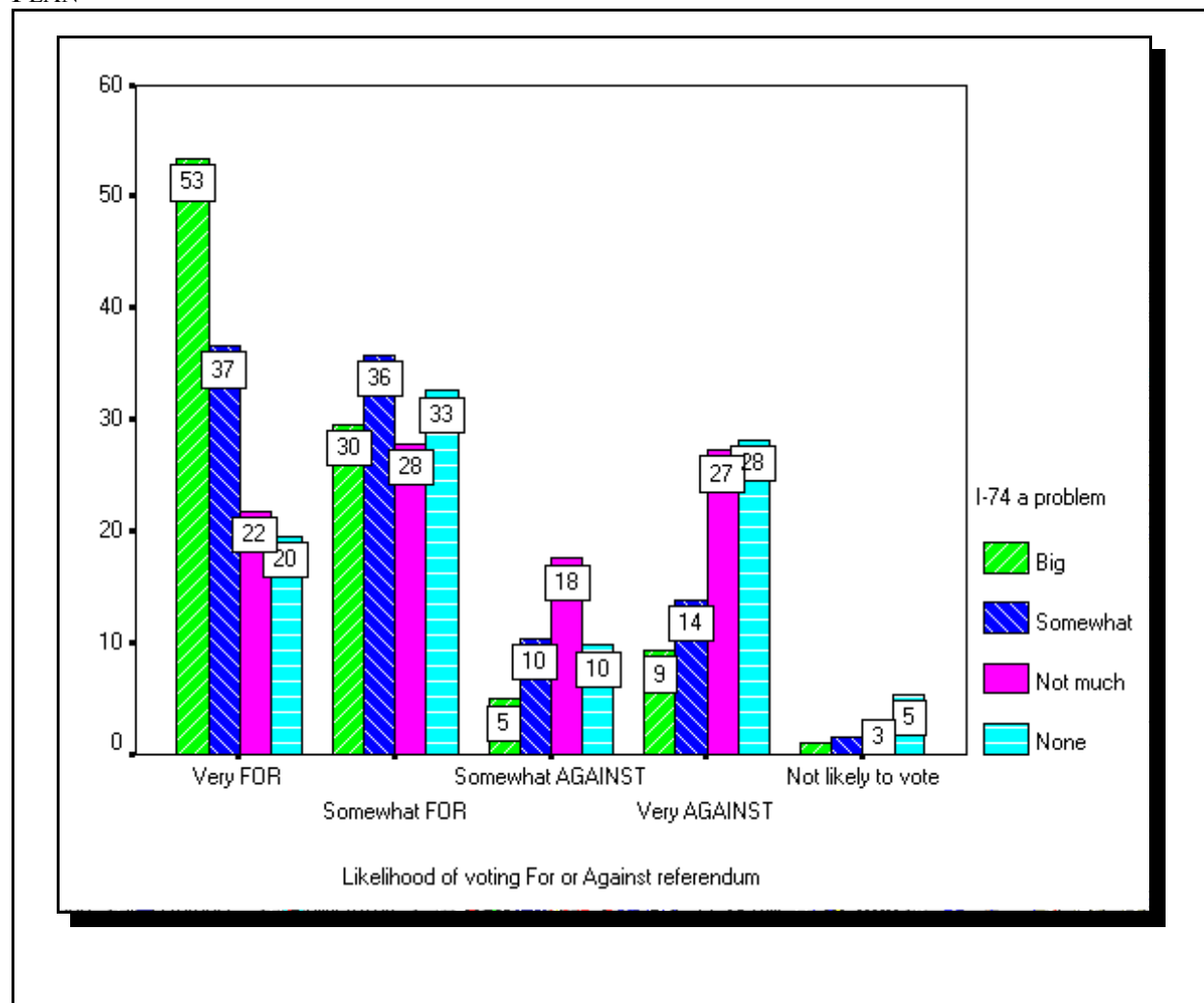
FIGURE 18. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT I-74 EXPANSION BY SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Opinion about the level of difficulty in crossing I-74 is related to support levels for the proposed transportation plan. Those reporting crossing I-74 is a big or somewhat of a problem are much more likely to support the transportation plan, apparently in the belief that the new bridge will have a positive impact on I-74 traffic crossing the river. Figure 19 demonstrates that more than half (53%) of those who rate I-74 a problem are very likely to vote for the transportation plan and 90% of those who are very likely to vote for the plan report crossing I-74 is either a big or somewhat of a problem.

The corollary of this finding is that those who rate crossing I-74 as a small or no problem are much more likely to oppose the transportation plan. If one views crossing I-74 as a problem the building of a new bridge is an attractive plan. If one views I-74 as unproblematic, opposition to the transportation plan is much more likely.

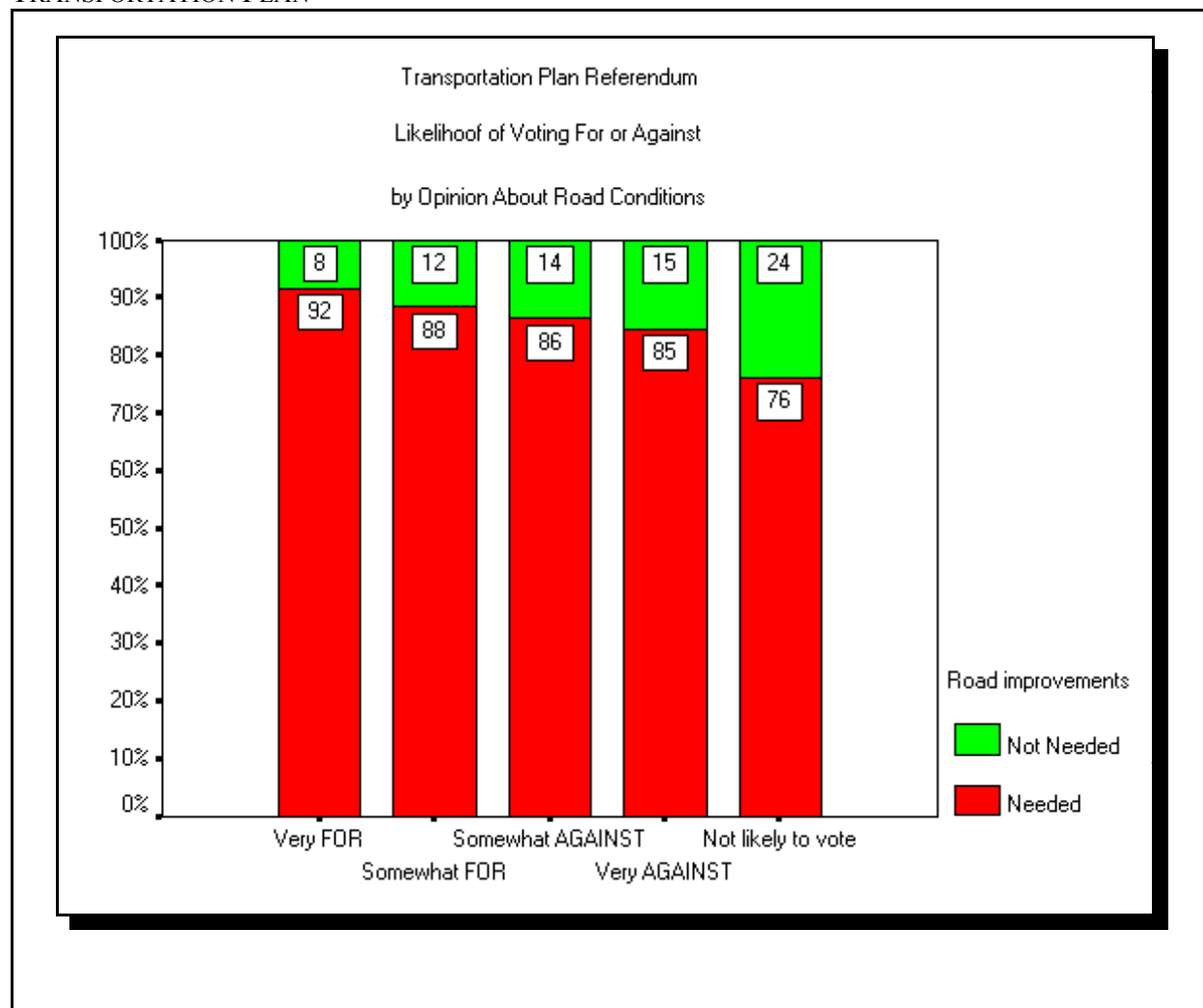
FIGURE 19. OPINION ABOUT CROSSING I-74 AND SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN



The second piece of the transportation plan proposes that money raised from the sales tax increase be used to perform road improvement and maintenance projects throughout the Quad Cities. A moderate but clear pattern can be observed in Figure 20. Namely, opinion that roads are in need of improvement increases with increases in support for the transportation plan. Those who strongly oppose the transportation plan are nearly twice as likely (15% versus 8%) to say that local area roads are in good shape.

The larger picture is that a large majority of respondents report that road improvements are needed regardless of their positions on the transportation plan. A smaller, but still large majority of respondents favor the transportation plan as well.

FIGURE 20. OPINION ABOUT ROAD CONDITIONS AND SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO TRANSPORTATION PLAN





## MISCELLANEOUS LOCAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Finally, respondents were read two general statements about transportation issues in the Quad Cities and asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statements.

The first of these two statements was, “*Local governments in the Quad Cities are working together to address transportation needs such as bridge crossings.*”

Sixty-four percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that local government is working together to address area transportation needs such as bridge crossings. Only 11% strongly agreed with that statement while 15% somewhat disagreed. Another 10% strongly disagree while eight percent did not know.

The second of the two statements was: “*The quality of bridge crossings is an important problem facing the Quad Cities area.*”

There is widespread agreement that bridge crossing quality is an important problem. Almost 85% rate the quality of bridge crossings as very or somewhat important to the area. Forty four percent rate it as very important. Less than four percent strongly disagree that bridge crossing quality is important.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

It is clear that Quad Cities residents support the proposed transportation plan, and that support is solid throughout the areas surveyed. Mississippi River crossings are recognized by area residents as an important issue facing the Quad Cities. They are generally aware of many current or planned improvement projects to existing bridges and still strongly support the new bridge, road improvement, and sales tax increase plan.

Survey participants are likely to cross the Mississippi River multiple times in any given week. Respondents consider crossing the Mississippi River a problem in general and using Interstate 74 in particular. A large majority of respondents support economic development in the Quad Cities. Most respondents think that the proposed new East Moline/Bettendorf bridge would have a positive impact on river crossing problems and on economic development. Improving roads is broadly supported throughout the area as well. Among those who oppose the plan, roughly one quarter of respondents, the increased sales tax is the most frequent reason for their opposition to the plan.